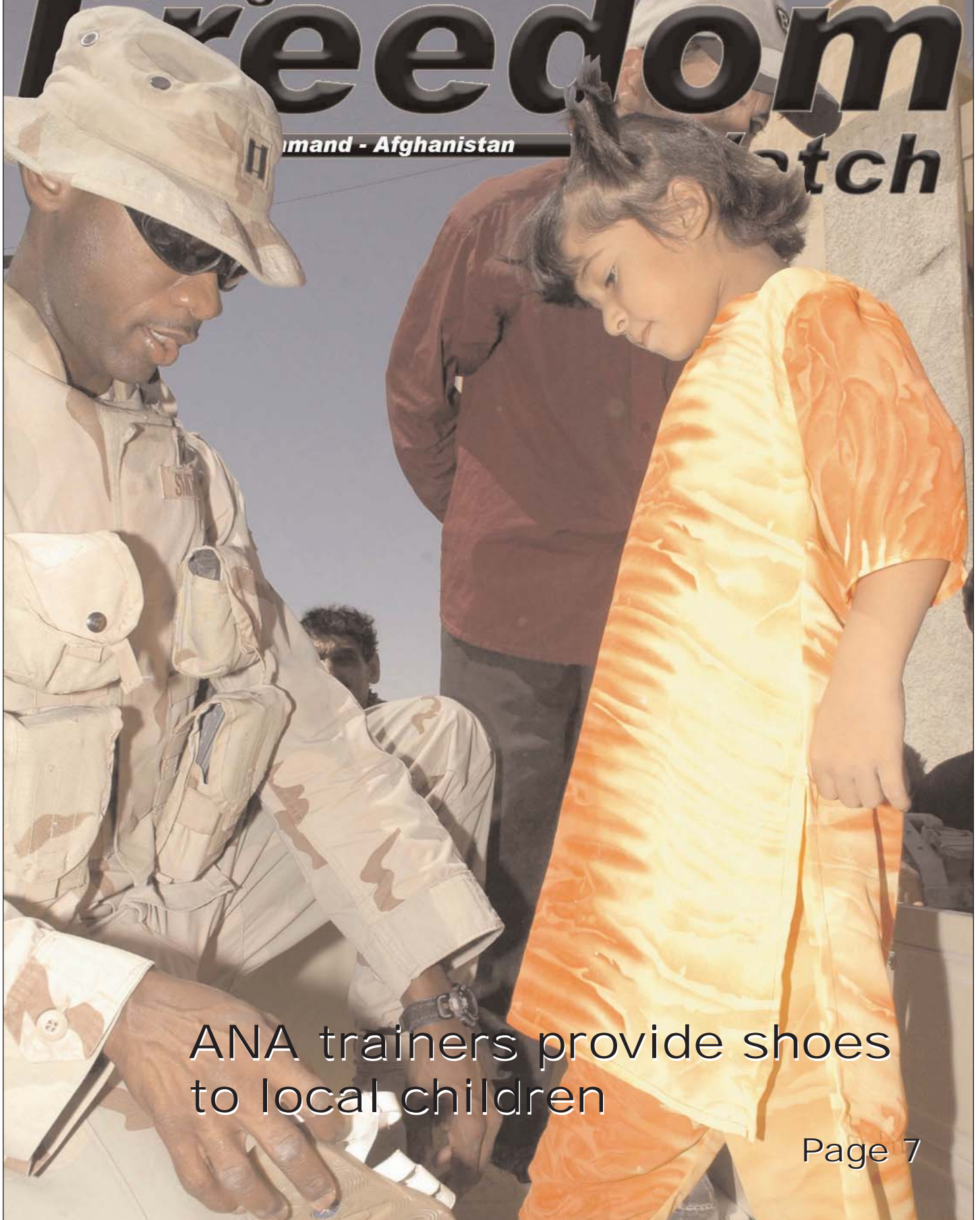


August 15, 2005

Afghanistan Freedom

Command - Afghanistan

Sketch



ANA trainers provide shoes
to local children

Page 7

Photo by Air Force Capt. Mark Gibson



BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Members of the 455th Expeditionary Maintenance Group perform phased maintenance on an A-10 Thunderbolt II Warthog. Airman 1st Class Anthony Meola (right), Airman 1st Class Charles Swiney (center), and Airman 1st Class Benjamin McIntosh (left) are all deployed from Pope Air Force Base, N.C.

Contents



Afghan National Army Embedded Training Team provides shoes to local children.

See story page 7

Page 3: Flexibility key to protection at Kandahar Airfield



◀ **Page 6:** 492nd Civil Affairs team begins work in Helmand Province

Page 8: No school too small

(Cover) Army Capt. Eddie J. Smith, embedded training team member for the ANA's 1st Brigade, 205th Corps, fits an Afghan girl with a pair of sandals. (Photo by Army Sgt. 1st Class Stephen Lum)

Afghanistan Freedom Watch

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Flexibility key to force protection at airfield



Photo by Air Force 1st Lt. Richard Zeigler

Air Force Staff Sgt. Daniel Albert mans an M-240 machine gun while guarding the flightline at Kandahar Airfield.

By Air Force 1st Lt. Andrew Schmidt
451st Air Expeditionary Group

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — Air Force 1st Lt. Richard Zeigler remembers what went through his mind when he was told that he would be deploying from the 6th Security Forces Squadron at MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., to Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, for six months.

"I was excited. I couldn't wait to get into the fight. I missed the first Gulf War, and I didn't want to miss this one," said Zeigler.

His wife was not as enthusiastic. "She was nervous at first, but she adjusted to it," he said. "She knows how the Air Force works. But it didn't help later when I told her that we had been rocketed."

Zeigler and the 31 other Airmen of the 451st Security Forces Flight here will soon return home after a successful deployment, but not before sharing

important lessons learned with the next group of security forces Airmen to arrive at this far-flung location.

In many ways, the force protection mission at Kandahar has been much like that of home. "Our mission is to protect resources and personnel on the airfield itself," he said. "We make sure that nothing breaches the perimeter and that rules and regulations are followed on the flight line."

However, deploying to a combat facility run by the Army, and shared with a multitude of Coalition forces, has presented its own special challenges. "We have to coordinate our activities with not just the Army but the Romanians, Dutch and British," said Zeigler. "There are differences in language, tactics and the fact that everyone answers to a different boss."

Of special consideration is the conservative Afghan culture. When manning the front gate and searching vehicles and drivers, security forces Airmen here soon found that they had to act diplomatically.

"We really have had to be conscious of the culture," said Zeigler. "There are some fine lines as to what you can do in a search. But we still manage to get things done."

"The language barrier can be a problem, but overall, they are a very kind people to work with," he added.

Years of training came into play in July when several enemy rockets struck the base, severely injuring two civilian workers. The quick response of security personnel was vital in identifying the area where the attack originated and securing the impact sites.

"It was exciting and real world," said Zeigler. "We kept expecting more to come, but fortunately, it never happened. The training we did when we arrived here on station really prepared us to stay calm and do our jobs."

In such a wartime environment, force protection is everyone's responsibility. Everyone from supply clerks to mechanics must be ready on a moment's notice to defend the camp

See Protection next page

Photos by Air Force 1st Lt. Richard Zeigler



(Above) Air Force Master Sgt. Victor Jackson makes friends with an Afghan child at the Russian flats, an old Soviet barracks now used by the families of Afghan National Army soldiers.

(Below) Members of the 451st Air Expeditionary Group receive extra weapons qualifications training.



From previous page Protection

and runway. For this reason, Airmen here are sometimes chosen to be force-protection augmentees.

Air Force Staff Sgt. Marlon Jackson, a personnel specialist deployed from the 17th Airlift Squadron at Charleston Air Force Base, S.C., was one such Airman selected for this duty. Initially apprehensive, he soon learned that his new duty of supervising local workers wasn't quite what he feared it would be.

"I didn't know what to expect. I didn't know how the Afghans would treat me," he said. "But I soon found out that they really do appreciate us here."

Jackson said that he ended up making close friendships with many of the local workers. "Some of the guys brought in meals for us that their parents had made," he said. "It was an experience that I will never forget for the rest of my life."

"To see how much the Afghans appreciated having us here made it all worthwhile. It was a life-changing experience," said Jackson.

"An environment such as this demands a truly expeditionary mindset," said Air Force Col. Eric Vollmecke, the commander of the 451st Air Expeditionary Group. "We have a complex mission set here with fixed-wing, helicopter and Coalition aircraft. And we have contract carriers from the former Soviet states that don't always operate according to our processes."

"Our security forces have had to maintain a constant vigilance to protect the airfield and deal with diplomatic concerns," said Vollmecke.

In addition to defending the airfield itself, security forces Airmen held weekly force-protection training sessions for other Airmen less experienced with carrying firearms. They even found time to take several civic aid trips outside the gate to provide medical check-ups and school supplies to local children and the elderly.

"When we first rolled in, we were utterly amazed at how poor it was," said Vollmecke. "But, I absolutely feel that we made an impact. The kids are very appreciative and want to hold your hand."

There is one last piece of advice that they will pass on to the next group of incoming security forces Airmen. "You have to be able to flex," said Zeigler. "Adjust what you know to address the situation when dealing in a joint environment."

"There's always wiggle room for the mission to get completed."

Women's Equality Day: 'The Struggle for Suffrage'

By Army Maj. Myna Myers and Army Master Sgt. Stephen Stugart
CJTF-76 Equal Opportunity Office

Suffrage - [n] *A vote given in deciding a controversial question, or in the choice of a man or woman for an office or trust; the formal expression of an opinion; assent; vote. A legal right guaranteed by the 15th amendment to the US constitution; guaranteed to women by the 19th amendment.*

The first colonists, came to America believing that as citizen of the "New World" they would have a chance at a better life, an opportunity to live, worship and work as they chose. However, the women who survived this long arduous journey to America were excluded from these opportunities based on their gender.

European immigrants believed in female inferiority. Both state and Federal laws reflected that perceived inferiority by banning women from voting, entering into contracts, sitting on juries, owning property, or seeking

higher education.

Women were merely an extension of their fathers, husbands, and sons.

Though they had no legal rights, women were expected to carry a fair share of the workload associated with the family business, be it farming, shoe making, or running the grocery store. Other primary purposes in life were to bear and raise children, care for the elderly or ill, domestic duties (housekeeping, cooking...) and provide companionship to their husbands.

Women realized that one of the most important steps to obtaining equality was through securing the right to vote. Throughout the 1800s the women's movement experienced many changes, some of which were divisive to the movement.

In the early 1900s women, along with many male supporters, waged a

long and bitter struggle to win the right to vote. They marched and picketed, held political rallies, petitioned, were arrested, and even endured hunger strikes.

Their commitment and sacrifices paid off on August 26 1920 with the passage of the 19th Amendment which states: "The right of citizenship of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State, on account of sex."

Each year we celebrate August 26 as Women's Equality Day to commemorate the women who paved the way for equal voting rights, truly highlighting the United States as a model for democracy. It seems fitting then that, through the selfless support of the women and men of the US Armed Forces, Afghanistan stands on the edge of democracy, poised to hold its first democratic free elections for all its citizens, both male and female.

Enduring Voices

What quality has this deployment strengthened in your character?



Army Capt. Jennifer Vieau
Task Force Strength,
249th General Hospital
"Empathy, because of all the trauma patients and Soldiers that come to the hospital."



Marine Sgt. Keith Reitz
Marine Tactical
Electronic Warfare
Squadron 3
"Endurance, and patience with the people you work with."



Air Force Capt. Kris Zhea
455th Expeditionary
Security Forces
Squadron
"Networking with people in a joint environment in order to accomplish the mission."



French Capt. Arnaud Raffoux
Scout Squadron,
French Battalion
"I will understand how the Afghan society is very different from European society. You have to be open-minded to understand the Afghan way of life."

Photo by Army Sgt. Jacob Caldwell



Army Maj. Eric Kotouc, 492nd Civil Affairs team officer in charge, talks to the operator of a day care center for single parents in Lashkar Gah. The team made arrangements to deliver civil assistance supplies to the children that stay there.

492nd Civil Affairs team begins work in Helmand Province

**By Army Staff Sgt. Jacob Caldwell
Combined Task Force Bayonet Public Affairs**

LASHKAR GAH, Afghanistan – The 492nd Civil Affairs team from Phoenix, Ariz., has hit the ground running at the Lashkar Gah Provincial Reconstruction Team in Helmand Province.

Having only been in country for a little more than five weeks, the eight-person team, consisting of two officers and six enlisted Soldiers, have been getting their feel for Lashkar Gah and the province which they will operate in for the year, according to Army Maj. Eric Kotouc, Civil Affairs, officer in charge.

With little overlapping time with the previous civil affairs team, Kotouc counts himself and his team lucky that they have trained together at Camp Roberts, Calif., and Fort Bragg, N.C.

"We were very fortunate that our squad remained stable. There were a lot of adjustments made to the battle roster right up until the day we left Bagram," said Kotouc.

While training together and deploying together have been a big help in staying mission ready, the nature and content of the training itself have also been helpful, according to Army Sgt. Shane Valverde, team member.

"We did a lot of cultural studies prior to coming here and that was probably the best thing that we did," said Valverde. "It made it less of a cultural shock. Once we got here, we felt like we had already been here. All of these things we've been hearing about since we got here have been nothing new to us. It's really helped us gain the confidence of all the non-government organizations working in the area."

Although training has been crucial to the team's early success, on-the-job training will be key in the weeks and months to come, to include learning to speak some Pashtu, one of the languages of the country.

"We only found out a couple of weeks prior to coming here exactly where we were going. That, in this country, makes a big difference," said Valverde, "Each region speaks a different lan-

guage, so you don't want to waste your time."

According to Kotouc, the mission is clear and three-fold.

"We have three main focus areas," he said. "Number one would be reconstruction. We manage the commander's emergency response program."

Other funds for the PRT are used for reconstruction projects, civil assistance projects, schools, and clinics.

"The second area is working with the provincial government here at Lashkar Gah, trying to give them the capacity to do their job and also a little oversight to help them do their job efficiently and, in some cases, honestly," Kotouc continued. "We are trying to instill in them the idea that they are serving the people, which is not always the first thing that comes to their mind."

"The third area is interaction and coordination with other organizations like [non-government organizations], contractors and all of the organizations that are doing work here. We're trying to make sure we coordinate and don't waste resources and have the maximum effect," said Kotouc.

Making the rounds to meet all of the local officials in Helmand Province has been a priority for the team since arriving in Afghanistan. That has all started with getting to know the governor's staff, said Kotouc.

"The government agencies here in Helmand Province pretty much mirror the ministries that are at the national level," said Kotouc. "I am still getting around visiting all of the various departments and getting to know them. I want to explore what their plan is, what their budget is, and what their shortfalls are so we can try to help build up their capacity."

"The whole idea is to work ourselves out of a job. If all we do while we're here is build stuff and create dependency relationships, then the next guy that comes is going to have the same level of burden and responsibility that we had," said Kotouc. "If we give the government agencies the capacity and some oversight to help them manage their capacity, then eventually that's the exit strategy, getting them to be able to stand on their own feet."

ANA trainers provide shoes to local children

By Army Sgt. 1st Class Stephen Lum
117th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – What started out as a simple idea of giving away 75 pairs of children's shoes quickly became an exercise in survival for Army Capt. Eddie J. Smith, Regional Command Advisory Group, an embedded training team member with the Afghan National Army's 1st Brigade, 205th Corps, stationed at Sher Zai Camp. More than 50 excited children rushed the pickup truck as it pulled up to the Afghan National Army officer's compound outside Sher Zai July 22.

Fortunately for Smith, an Army Reservist serving as a personnel officer, and his assistant Army Sgt. 1st Class Alfonso Aguilar, there were several Afghan National Army soldiers to slow down the persistent children. Smith climbed into the bed of his truck and proceeded to fit a young girl with a pair of shoes. The fitting lasted for only two children, as many little arms reached through the "barricade" of ANA soldiers to grab shoes from the, three-foot-square boxes. He gave up and poured the rest of the shoes on to the ground outside the truck where they were gone in seconds like bargain hunters at a one-hour sale.

"My wife, Kina, and her friend LaVonda Moore came up with the idea of collecting shoes for children of Afghanistan," said Smith, normally a ninth-grade algebra teacher in Dallas. "Members of their Women of Destiny organization brought donations to the meeting location at Calvary Philadelphia Church, where LaVonda's husband, Rev. J.H. Moore Jr., holds services. My wife is very supportive of what I'm doing down here. She realizes this is a humbling experience from God."

"Even my boys, Donovan and Kyron, are very understanding," said Smith, "especially since I'm getting to contact them on a regular basis. They are really proud of what I'm doing."

"I'd like to say thank you to the Women of Destiny, who are taking up a collection of toys, blankets, tablets and pencils for my next visit," said Smith.

"I'm ready to do it again," said Smith, even after the flurry of the shoe distribution. "I am really enjoying this tour and being a part of history in the making."



Army Capt. Eddie J. Smith, 1st Brigade, 205th Corps personnel officer, fits an Afghan girl with a pair of sandals.

No school too small

By Army Pfc. Vincent Fusco
20th Public Affairs Detachment

FORWARD OPERATING BASE ANED, Afghanistan – With the banging of hammers on a hot tin roof, a girls' school shelter for grades one through six in the Sarobi District of Paktika Province was finished July 23.

This is the seventh shelter completed by the Soldiers of Civil Affairs Team A, D Company, 96th Civil Affairs Battalion with the assistance of the local population.

The team builds these schools with the local people to show how the Coalition is here to help the people take ownership of what they have, said Army Sgt. 1st Class David Dickson, the CAT-A medic.

"Most of the civil affairs projects here are done with Afghan contractors," said Army Capt. Brian A. Orlosky, the CAT-A team leader. "But we like to stay busy, and there's a greater impact with Coalition forces helping out."

The team started building these shelters after the team did a consolidated schools project in which they went to schools around Orgun-E to identify where the sites were.

There are 22 schools in Sarobi, but only two have buildings. This new site in Sarobi was once a "yard school," a small patch of land with only trees to provide shade.

"We were thinking about what we could do to help these schools when I got the idea to build these carport sort of structures," said Orlosky.

These shelters are quick-impact projects done with commander's emergency response program funds, which paid for the lumber in each project. When the funds ran out, the team continued building shelters with assistance from the 391st Engineers and the 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, and the team's out-of-pocket funds.

The shelters take roughly three days to complete. With the rocky ground, it takes one day to dig holes and pour cement for support poles.

Facilities like these provide much-needed shade and cover from the sun and rain, and are in use the day after they are completed.

"The girls don't seem to get anything out here," said Dickson. "It's nice to be able to give them something of their own."

While education is an issue of concern with local leaders, girls schools are not as high of a priority as other schools. But, with these simple structures comes an earlier chance at education, an important provision in the Coalition's plan of assisting the people during upcoming parliamentary elections.

"Before you can give people a democracy, you have to educate them so they can read," said Dickson.

The schools help validate the elected officials' goals, said Orlosky. They strive to improve education and work with Coalition forces.

"A person who can read can discover the various points of a subject," said Orlosky. "They can do research for themselves rather than listen to people tell them about it."

The same day the team finished the new structure, they learned that the first school they built in Zoma, a village near Sarobi, was nearly burned down by transgressors.

They informed the district chief of police, who was glad that the school did not burn down and intended to put security on



Photos by Army Pfc. Vincent Fusco

An Afghan man drives a nail into a roof support as an Afghan National Army soldier holds it in place.

the school to make sure an incident like this does not happen again.

"It's not going to stop us from building schools," said Dickson.

The locals are going to be more vigilant looking for Taliban, he said.

"The locals have stopped and warned us of mines and dangerous situations since we started here," said Orlosky. "When you have someone looking out for you, you must have made an impact."

"It's the greatest thing when you can see the fruits of your labors put to use," said Dickson.

The people here want life to be better for the next generation, he said.

"[Coalition assistance is] more than just spending money," said Orlosky. "It's picking projects and making an effect."



(Top) Army Staff Sgt. Chris Crews, from Civil Affairs Team A, D Company, 96th Civil Affairs Battalion drives a nail into the frame of a new girls school July 23.



(Left) Army Sgt. 1st Class David Dickson, a medic with Civil Affairs Team A, D Company, 96th Civil Affairs Battalion, nails down a section of tin roof.

(Below) The tin roof is the last thing needed to complete the new girls school in the Sarobi District of Paktika Province July 23.



1-508th, ANA perform joint patrols



Photos by Army Pfc. Vincent Fusco

A squad of Afghan National Army soldiers follows a patrol through the area surrounding Forward Operating Base Aned in Paktika Province July 27.

By Army Pfc. Vincent Fusco
20th Public Affairs Detachment

FORWARD OPERATING BASE ANED, Afghanistan

— In an effort to bolster security while training Afghan National Army soldiers, the Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment at Forward Operating Base Aned are performing joint known area of interest (NAI) patrols outside the base.

The purpose of these patrols is to look for fixed and rocket positions in any area that can see the base from high ground, said Army Staff Sgt. Eric Cross, 2nd Squad leader, 3rd Platoon, A Company, 1st Bn., 508th PIR.

"Basically, we go up and clear the hill," said Cross.

NAI patrols are done on a daily basis by alternating squads, said Army Sgt. Oscar Torres, Team Leader, 2nd Sq., 3rd Plt., A Co., 1-508th PIR. The areas are cleared using vehicle patrols and sometimes by helicopter.

"If anything happens nearby, we respond," said Torres. "The immediate reaction force also responds, just in case."

ANA soldiers have been a part of these patrols since June, when the Soldiers of the 1-508th PIR returned from Bermel, said Torres. The Soldiers of Task Force Fury also have select days when they train the ANA.

The patrols give both forces a chance to bond and learn from each other; and if no contact takes place, a little chance to relax.

"The plan is, we get them to fight for their own country," said Torres. "We get them trained up so the next unit won't really need to."

While working to build the ANA's confidence and knowledge is not always an easy thing to do, the Soldiers of the battalion teach with patience.

"We're a lot more patient with them, and we treat the people good," said Torres.

With parliamentary elections taking place in September, the ANA's progress has been promising and instilled confidence in their teachers.

"The ANA's been doing really good," said Torres. "In a few months or so, they'll really be on line."

It is the hope that these joint patrols and training will prove to be well worth the effort in September, when Coalition and ANA forces will step up to keep the elections secure.

"Nobody's ever done this before," said Torres. "[Their proficiency] all depends on the intensity of the deployment."



Army Staff Sgt. Eric Cross, 2nd Squad leader, 3rd Platoon, A Company, 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, guides a patrol through the area surrounding Forward Operating Base Aned July 27.



Photo by Army 1st Lt. Laura Walker

Bulldozer operators from Alaska-based C Company, 864th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy) clear a path for the road between Kandahar and Tarin Kowt. The Kodiaks have led Task Force Pacemaker's push from the south.

Kandahar to Tarin Kowt Road nears completion

By Army 1st Lt. Laura Walker
Task Force Pacemaker - Public Affairs

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – One of the most encouraging successes of the U.S. Military presence in Afghanistan is the approaching completion of the Tarin Kowt Road, a road bringing together the cities of Kandahar and Tarin Kowt.

Coalition forces have been dedicated to connecting this road, a task that has spanned 14 months and 117 kilometers.

"With elections on the horizon, extending transportation routes into more rural areas of Afghanistan will play an essential role in encouraging the democratic process," said Army Maj. Jerry Farnsworth, Task Force Pacemaker executive officer.

Election dates have been pushed back twice due, at least in part, to the logistical difficulties of coordinating between provinces. Success in road construction here means not only making day-to-day life easier for the citizens; it facilitates the success of the

first democratically elected government in Afghanistan.

The work on the TK road has been the focus of two different Army Engineer rotations. Road construction began in 2004 with the 528th Engineer Battalion, from Louisiana. They completed 46.5 kilometers of road between July 2004 and February 2005. Task Force Pacemaker Engineers later took over the construction project. The Task Force is composed of active and reserve units of A Company and Headquarters and Support Company of the 864th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), Fort Lewis, Wash.; C Company, 864th ECB Fort Richardson, Alaska; A Company, 391st Light Engineer Battalion, Asheville, N.C.; C Company, 926th Engineer Battalion, Huntsville, Ala.; and the 298th Engineer Detachment, Pearl City, Hawaii.

Task Force Pacemaker took over the construction in April, and will have completed a remarkable 70 kilometers of road work through some of the most difficult terrain in Afghanistan.

Initial estimates put project comple-

tion somewhere around the spring of 2006, but efforts under TF Pacemaker's personnel and Army Lt. Col. Paul M. Paolozzi moved the date to Sept. 15, just days prior to the new election date.

The Pacemakers consider that achievement a victory in the war on terror.

"The best weapons of the Taliban are not IEDs (improvised explosive devices) and RPGs (rocket propelled grenades), it's ignorance and isolation," said Paolozzi. "The road we're building destroys both of those weapons by giving the people freedom of mobility and the capability to learn what the Afghan government is doing for them. They won't need to be dependant on the Taliban for information, twisted thinking, or municipal support."

Continued development is essential to any post-electoral agenda for peace building in Afghanistan, he said. No matter the outcome of elections, the extension of routes into rural Afghanistan provides much potential in strengthening the new government's credibility. The completion of the road couldn't come at a better time.



Photos by Marine Sgt. Robert Storm

Villagers from the Sarur Village, Dari Nur District, Nangarhar Province talk with soldiers from the Afghan National Army after they turned in a weapons cache July 26.

Local populace turns in weapons cache

By Marine Sgt. Robert Storm
2nd Battalion 3rd Marine Regiment

JALALABAD AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Afghans from the Sarur Village, Dari Nur District, Nangarhar Province came forward to turn in a weapons cache July 26 to W Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment and Afghan National Army forces.

"My job is to recover illegal weapons by any means available. Sometimes we have to use force, but sometimes, luckily, the villagers in the area will come forward to let us know about them," said Marine Company Commander Capt. Javier Torres, from Juana Diaz, Puerto Rico. "We're the first outsiders these people have seen since they were invaded by the Soviets, so it's important for us to build trust. We didn't come in and search all the houses because they showed us the weapons cache, and we want them to trust us so they'll come forward again."

The villagers at first wanted the Marine Corps to pay \$500 for the weapons before they would reveal the location, but after some easy negotiating, they agreed to give up the site in

return for medical assistance.

At an elevation of 4,400 feet, the village is situated between mountains and takes more than four hours to reach by foot. The trail leading to the village is inaccessible by vehicle and starts at 1,300 feet. The five-kilometer hike ascends 3,000 feet making it difficult for even the Afghan National Army to



Munitions from a weapons cache that was turned in by local Afghans from the Sarur Village, Dari Nur District, Nangarhar Province, July 26.

patrol the area. Due to the village's isolated location, basic medical care is unavailable. To seek treatment, the villagers must first make a three-hour hike down to the nearest road then travel to a nearby city.

"It's amazing people live up here. At one point, the trail we took had a sheer cliff drop off on one side. This is one of the hardest hikes I've ever done," said Marine Lance Cpl. Joshua Britner, a mortarman from Freemont, Ohio.

While many times the Marine Corps is known for an aggressive approach, the Marines chose a light-handed option in the hopes that three adjacent villages would reveal any concealed weapons hidden in their areas. The villages' isolation makes them perfect locations for storing munitions.

Without local help, the caches would never be found. After recovering the munitions, the problem of getting the cache down the mountain surfaced. The only workable solution was to employ the use of mules to carry the munitions back down.

"We are very happy to help; with the cooperation of the ANA, we are glad the Marines are here. They bring peace and security. We want to cooperate and will help look for more weapons," said a village elder through interpreter Sayed Noorullah. "We have no medicine or schools, so for Marines to bring us help is a great thing."

Canadians prepare for Afghanistan deployment

By Canadian Capt. Richard Perreault
Canadian Forces Provincial Reconstruction Team Public Affairs



Photo by Canadian Capt. Richard Perreault

The activation team consists of specialized troops from all across Canada. Most are from the Canadian Forces Joint Headquarters and the Canadian Forces Joint Signal Regiment, Canadian Forces Base Kingston, Ontario but others are drawn from the 1st Engineer Support Unit in Moncton, New Brunswick, the 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry in Edmonton, Alberta, and the 3rd Canadian Support Group in Montreal.

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Members of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry are back in Afghanistan providing security as part of an activation team to prepare for the upcoming deployment of Canadian forces to operate the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team.

The group of about 40 infantry soldiers is from the 3rd Battalion, PPCLI, from Edmonton, Alberta.

"Our role here is to provide security during road moves between Kandahar Airfield and the PRT site, perform security and general duty tasks at KAF, and escort jingle trucks as they come in and out of this base," said Canadian Capt. Geoff Mundy, platoon commander of the Defense and Security Platoon of the activation team.

While these tasks are not a change from what these soldiers are trained to do, they did receive additional training in dealing with a threat unique to this area of operations - improvised explosive devices.

"It is the first time we've deployed with an activation team but the tasks are similar to what we train for at our unit," added Mundy. "One of the threats here is IEDs. They take many forms and are difficult to defend against. We do use a wide array of defensive measures and have received training on how to mitigate and combat the risks posed by such devices."

While some of the soldiers are veterans of an Afghanistan mission, this is a first for a few troops, including Canadian Pvt. Marcel Regier.

"I have been with 3rd Battalion PPCLI for three years and so far this deployment has been the most interesting," said Regier. "Of course, you have to get used to the heat but we did receive a lot of briefings about that and the general threat to expect."

This group of soldiers will return home when actual PRT personnel arrive and the mission of the activation team is complete. While their time in theater is relatively short, they still provide a significant capability to the activation and are contributing to the successful completion of the task to get the area ready for the next group of Canadian soldiers scheduled to arrive in a few weeks.

PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD

A U.S. Air Force C-17 Globemaster arrives at the Kabul International Airport against the rising sun August 1.

*Photo by Army Sgt Douglas DeMaio
20th Public Affairs Detachment*

If you have high-quality photos of service members supporting the Coalition mission or enjoying well-deserved off-duty time, please e-mail them to freedomwatch@baf.afgn.army.mil. Please include full identification and caption information, including who is in the photo and what action is taking place.



Baghran valley improvements total more than 1.5 million

By Army Sgt. 1st Class Todd Oliver
CJTF-76 Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – More than \$1.5 million is being spent on civic improvements in the Baghran valley of southern Afghanistan in an effort to show the benefits of peace and improve educational opportunities for the people there.

The projects range in scope and size from an \$80,000 health care clinic renovation to the construction of two police stations costing \$300,000.

The improvements will raise the quality of life and improve the government of Afghanistan's ability to maintain law and order.

More than \$300,000 will be spent for the construction of two police stations and a district police headquarters that will house district leaders and provide a base of operations for local police forces. Four police vehi-

cles and 10 motorcycles are being provided to law enforcement officials in the area. The cost of these transportation assets is more than \$125,000.

Four schools are being renovated, each at a cost of nearly \$200,000, at locations throughout the area so men, women and children will be able to have a comfortable place that fosters learning. Road construction, repair and maintenance equipment, at a cost of more than \$250,000, has been purchased both to help encourage commerce and to improve the reaction time of local law enforcement agencies.

"These projects all show a reaching out by the Afghan government to the people of this area," said Army Lt. Col. Andy Mazerik, a civil affairs specialist working in the area. "New equipment for police stations allows the officers in that area to better respond to threats and the improvements to roads will help increase security and trade."

Investigation of CH-47 crash completed

Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan

KABUL, Afghanistan – An investigation of the April 6 CH-47D helicopter crash near Ghazni that killed 18 is complete and the results have been provided to family members of the deceased.

The U.S. Army's Collateral Investigation Board reviewed events leading up to the crash of the helicopter known as "Big Windy 25." The investigation found that the aircraft encountered a severe dust storm with winds over 45 knots that caused the pilots to lose outside visibility. They were transitioning to instrument flight procedures when they became spatially disoriented and over-controlled the aircraft.

The five Army crewmembers and the passengers - six Army Soldiers, one Marine, two Army National Guard Soldiers, one Army Reserve Soldier, and three civilian contractors with KBR - were fatally injured and the aircraft was destroyed.

The helicopter, which belonged to F Company, 159th Aviation Regiment, 12th Aviation Brigade, was transporting passengers and supplies from Forward Operating Base Aned to Forward Operating Base Sarhawdza in Ghazni Province.

Dari/Pashtu phrase of the week



Afghan cultural tidbit

Dari/Pashtu phrase of the week:

Do you have...?

Dari

Shoorba dared...?

(Sho-ma da-red...?)

Pashtu

Tasi lari...?

(Ta-so la-ray...?)

It was in Afghanistan that the ancient religion of Zoroastrianism began in the 6th century B.C. Later, Buddhism spread west from India to the Bamiyan Valley, where it remained strong until the 10th century A.D. The eastward sweep of Islam reached Afghanistan in the 7th century A.D., and today the vast majority of Afghans are Muslim.

(Source: http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/middle_east/afghanistan/history.htm)

FREEDOM WATCH EDITORIAL**EVERYDAY RACISM**

By Army Sgt. James-Denton Wyllie
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Spic. Chink. Kike. Mick. Honkey. Nigger.

Hajji.

All of the above are racial epithets. They are all words intended to dehumanize and strip a specific group of people of their dignity.

In society, and by extension the military, the first line of words are unspeakable slurs that normally would not ever see the light of day in civilized conversation.

However, a number of men and women serving in Afghanistan use the word in the second line - Hajji, daily.

"I just bought a Hajji movie." "I just got off Hajji watch." These are just some of the ways in which Hajji is misused when referring to local Afghans.

Why is this word, which is a known racial slur, acceptable to many service members in theater? Why, in an Army composed of people from throughout the world and people from a variety of creeds and religions, do some troops

deem it all right to deny one specific group the respect they give to others?

Is it a misunderstanding of the word itself?

The dictionary defines a Hajji as one who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca. That is, a Hajji is a person who has completed the Hajj - a religious journey to Mecca to complete a series of ritual acts symbolic of the life of the Islamic prophet Muhammad.

Viewed as such, used out of context, the word becomes doubly offensive. Not only does it become a racial slur, but a religious one as well.

"You have to know if a person has gone to Mecca before you call them a Hajji," said Afghan resident Aktor Ali. "If they haven't, then whoever says it is disrespecting the Muslim religion."

"Winning hearts and minds." Many serving in Afghanistan use this phrase. However, in the battle to win these hearts and minds, shouldn't we start with our own? As service members, we hold each other to a higher standard. Respect and integrity are integral parts of each service's code. To treat

others as we would like to be treated and to always do what is legally and morally right is expected of us at all times.

"That an American service member would refer to a local national in a derogatory term is intolerable because it violates the values for which we fight and die," said Army Chaplain (Maj.) Claude A. Crisp, Joint Logistics Command. "We fight to give freedom from tyranny and from oppression. To use profane names against those we are defending undermines our ability to win this war and certainly defies our own moral code."

There are those who might not agree with this view. "What's the big deal?" they may ask. "It's just a word."

Consider that there are more than 25,000 Afghan National Army troops serving their country every day. These soldiers are trying to turn their country away from the terror it has known and toward a prosperous future. Do these soldiers who risk their lives deserve to have themselves or their countrymen called by such a name? How would a

service member react if they were referred to as a stupid American or an American pig?

"I would be very upset if someone called me by a racist name," said Air Force Staff Sgt. Jessica Riordan, American Forces Network Afghanistan. "Anyone would be justified in feeling upset. We should all respect their religion and the Hajj."

As men and women who are supposed to embody the best of our nation, we have to start policing ourselves. We are obligated to stop ourselves, and fellow troops, from using such a destructive word.

The word Hajji has no place in our vocabulary. It has no place in our day-to-day operations, and it has no place in our overall mission. Slurs are for those who are too ignorant to see the truth behind stereotypes. They are the realm of those who would traffic in terror instead of peace. We are Americans and we are above that.

So the next time you see a resident, do your part and refer to him or her not by what they are not - Hajji, but by what they are - an Afghan.

Helicopter crashes during training exercise; two injured

Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - A U.S. military AH-64 Apache helicopter, conducting training at a helicopter range near Bagram Airfield, crashed July 29, injuring the two crewmembers aboard.

Hostile fire is not suspected in the incident.

U.S. forces secured the crash site and conducted an investigation.

The two crew members were transported to Bagram Airfield for medical treatment.

Six detainees released to Parwan governor

Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - The six Afghan men detained for questioning by U.S. forces during operations near Bagram Airfield on July 25 were temporarily released July 26 into the custody of the governor of Parwan province.

The governor took control of the six based upon an agreement that they would be available for further questioning regarding the circumstances leading to their detention.

They were detained during an operation July 25 that sparked protests near the front gate of the Coalition base at Bagram Airfield the following morning.

The individuals had in their possession a rocket-propelled grenade, a rocket launcher with a timing device, an AK-47 assault rifle with armor-piercing rounds and a variety of demolition materials.

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"Leadership is intangible,
and therefore no weapon
ever designed can
replace it."

General Omar N. Bradley